

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17073 141534Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 ( ISO ) W  
-----028398 142052Z /40  
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1487

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 17073

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ICJ EG  
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON AMBASSADOR ABDULLAH  
- ALI EL-ERIAN

REF: STATE 173735

1. SINCE WE UNCERTAIN WHAT CV INFORMATION DEPARTMENT  
ALREADY HAS ON EL-ERIAN, FOLLOWING IS BASIC BIOGRAPHIC  
DATA WE HAVE. WISH TO POINT OUT THAT SINCE EL-ERIAN  
HAS BEEN ABROAD FOR MANY YEARS, NO OFFICERS CURRENTLY  
SERVING HERE HAVE OTHER THAN PASSING ACQUAINTANCE WITH  
HIM. EL-ERIAN, 58 YEARS OLD, IS DISTINGUISHED SPECIALIST  
IN INTERNATIONAL LAW. PRIOR TO SERVING AS AMBASSADOR IN  
BERN HE WAS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO UN EUROPEAN  
OFFICES IN GENEVA (1973-76), AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE,  
DEPUTY PERMREP TO UN IN NEW YORK (1967-?) AND DIRECTOR OF  
MFA'S LEGAL DEPARTMENT(1960-66). PRIOR TO THAT HE  
TAUGHT INTERNATIONAL LAW AT CAIRO UNIVERSITY.

2. EL-ERIAN IS CONSIDERED FRIENDLY TO U.S., PROBABLY  
AS RESULT OF HAVING BEEN EDUCATED AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
AND HAVING SPENT MANY YEARS OF HIS ADULT LIFE IN U.S.  
HIS LOYALTY TO EGYPT HAS NEVER BEEN QUESTIONED, ALTHOUGH  
IN THE PAST HE SOMETIMES TOOK COURAGEOUS STANDS IN OP-  
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POSITION TO HIS GOVERNMENT. HIS UN COLLEAGUES CONSIDERED  
EL-ERIAN REMARKABLY OBJECTIVE IN HIS EVALUATION OF CON-  
TROVERSIAL ISSUES. OCCASIONALLY HIS APPRECIATION FOR  
OTHER POINTS OF VIEW HAS LED HIM TO MAKE PROMISES THE  
GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT COULD NOT KEEP. HE DOES TEND TO  
AVOID SITUATIONS THAT CALL FOR WEIGHTY POLITICAL DECISIONS.

3. ACCORDING TO HIS PEERS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, EL-ERIAN IS RESPECTED AS A HIGHLY COMPETENT LEGAL SPECIALIST. HIS DECLINE IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FROM HEAD OF LEGAL DEPARTMENT AND AMBASSADOR TO PARIS TO AMBASSADOR IN BERN, WAS APPARENTLY DUE TO HIS POOR PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH FORMER FORMIN ISMAIL FAHMY. ONE SENIOR OFFICIAL DESCRIBED EL-ERIAN AS HIGHLY COMPETENT, BUT SOMEWHAT LAZY.

4. THE ACADEMICALLY ORIENTED AMBASSADOR LOOKS MORE LIKE A PROFESSOR THAN A DIPLOMAT. HE HAS WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED, IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH, NUMEROUS BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON INTERNATIONAL LAW. HE HAS AT LEAST THREE BROTHERS, ONE OF WHOM, MAHMUD, IS A NON-ENTITY IN THE NORTH AMERICAN SECTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. ANOTHER IS RESPECTED DEAN OF ENGINEERING FACULTY AT CAIRO UNIVERSITY. MRS. EL-ERIAN IS A COSMOPOLITAN WOMAN WHO SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH AND FRENCH. EILTS

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**TAGS:** PDIP, EG, ICJ, (EL-ERIAN, ABDULLAH ALI)  
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